



# A STUDY OF MENTAL HEALTH AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS IN RELATION TO DEPRESSION

Dr. Harpreet Kaur

Assistant Professor, Sewa Devi S.D. College of Education, Tarn Taran.

## ABSTRACT

The study examined the mental health among college students in relation to depression. The sample of 62 college students was selected by random sampling technique from government degree colleges of Patti and Tarn Taran affiliated to Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar only.

The Descriptive statistics i.e. mean, S.D., ANOVA and Karl Pearson's product moment correlation were used to analyse the data. The results demonstrated that mental health was negatively and significantly correlated with depression among total, female, rural, urban and humanities and BC and general group of college students, but negatively and not significantly correlated in male group, science & commerce stream college students and also in SC category college students with depression. On the basis of above findings, it is suggested that the colleges should have counsellors and guidance workers in order to help in solving personal and educational problems of college students.

**KEYWORDS:** Mental health, Depression.

In the emerging modern era, life is becoming more complex problematic and conflicting day by day. Technological and economic progress has also brought about a lot of changes in general life-style. Fast life and competition in the world are slowly becoming the agents in killing the regenerative processes among human beings. In the present life style, everything seems to explode. The increasing desires have negative impact on student's health. Emotional pressure is increasing day by day especially at adolescent stage. While adjusting to the new demands and expectations, most college students are in a state of disequilibrium or are emotionally disturbed. Mental health stands for a balance that is dynamic. A mentally healthy person is one who is in harmony with his own self and consequently with those around him. The conscious and unconscious aspects of his mind are in tune with each other. In spite of his problems and difficulties he is in consonance with the rhythm of life. He has a wholesome balanced personality by and large free from schisms and inconsistencies, emotional and nervous tensions, discards and conflicts. Perfect mental health however, is a myth. Poor mental health can have import effect on the wider health and development of college students and is association with several health and social outcomes such as higher alcohol, tobacco and illicit substances use, adolescent pregnancy, school dropout and delinquent behaviour. There is growing consensus that healthy development during childhood and adolescence contributes to good mental health and can prevent mental health problems. Kumar (1991) describes mental health is an index which shows extent to which the person has been able to meet his environmental demands, social, emotional or physical.

Nanda (2001) conducted a study on mental health of 1579 students of 86 high school of Orissa. The results revealed that female students were found to have better mental health than male students. While comparing the male and female students in urban, rural schools, it was found that female students have better mental health than male students in rural schools.

Jha (2005) examined the mental health in relation to self- confidence and guidance needs of 200 adolescents from two schools of Patiala district. The results revealed that rural children faced more problems than urban children, especially girls.

Kaur (2011) conducted a study on achievement motivation in relation to mental health of 200 students of secondary schools of Punjab. The results revealed different mental health patterns according to gender. The male and female students have found no significant difference in their mental health. Further, the results showed that there is no significant difference in mental health of urban and rural students.

Depression is as old as man. It has accompanied by throughout one's history, and the world's literature has chronicled it with the intensity and care that so ancient and so widespread a condition warrants. Miller & Seligman (1973) explained that it has become so common that it has been called "The Common Cold of Mental Illness". Depression is a serious health problem that can affect people of all ages, including children and college students. Everyone occasionally feels blue or sad. But these feelings are usually short-lived and pass within a couple of days. When you have depression, it interferes with daily life and causes pain for both you and those who care about you. Serious depression can demolish family life as well as the life of the depressed person. People distress from depression is unconscious of it and so are their friends, well-wishers and colleagues because of

in many cases, depression does not presume life frightening proportions though the wish for enthusiastic and fuller living in the upset persons is reduced in changing amounts. In psychological approach, it is a mood or emotional state that is characterized by sadness, loss of interest in activities, and decreased energy, loss of confidence and self-esteem, inappropriate guilt, thoughts of death and suicide, diminished concentration, and disturbance of sleep and appetite. Depression is a mental disorder that involves body, mood, and thoughts. American Psychiatric Association (1994) defined depression as a persistent mood disturbance, plus at least four of the following: sleep disturbance, changes in psychomotor activity, loss of ability to experience pleasure and interest, fatigue, feeling of worthlessness or guilt, difficulty in concentrating, and preoccupation with death or a wish to die. A variety of somatic symptoms may also be present. The way of eating and sleeping can change in depressed people, too. Someone with a sense of despair can have a difficult time with concentration and decision-making. With a more intense depression, people can have self-destructive thoughts. Gathercole (2004) & Berk (2005) depression is a feeling of sadness, gloominess, suffering desperation and hopelessness, which occur together with loss of satisfaction in usual or favourite activities, disruption in sleeping pattern, loss of appetite, lack of concentration and loss of energy. Beck (1974) describe that depression may be considered to be reflected in a cognitive triad which consists of negative views of the self, of the outside world and of the future.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To study interaction effect of (a) gender and (b) location on mental health among college students.
2. To study interaction effect of (a) Stream and (b) social Category on mental health among college students.
3. To study relationship between depression and mental health across gender, location, stream and social category among college students.

## HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY:

1. There is no significant interaction effect of (a) gender, (b) location on mental health among college students.
2. There is no significant interaction effect of (a) Stream and (b) social Category on mental health among college students.
3. There is significant relationship between mental health and depression across gender, location, stream and social category among college students.

## DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

1. The study was delimited to government degree colleges of Patti and Tarn Taran affiliated to Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar only.
2. The study was delimited to location of residence of college students.
3. The study was delimited to B.A./BSc./B.Com. stream of sixth semester college students only.
4. The study was delimited to social Category i.e. Scheduled Caste (SC), Backward Class (BC) and general category.

**OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS:**

- 1. Mental Health:** Mental health refers to the balanced development of the individual's personality and emotional attitude which enables him to live harmoniously with his fellowmen. It implies that the individual behaviour should be balanced and also this balance should be maintained in every situation. It is an ability to make adequate adjustment to the environment on the plan of reality.
- 2. Depression:** Depression is a common mental disorder, characterized by sadness, pessimism, past failure, loss of pleasure, guilt feelings, punishment feelings, self-dislike, self-criticalness, suicidal thoughts or wishes, crying, agitation, loss of interest, indecisiveness, worthlessness, loss of energy, changes in sleeping pattern, irritability, changes in appetite, concentration difficulty, tiredness and fatigue and loss of interest in sex.
- 3. College students:** The students who are studying in sixth semester of graduation were considered as college students.

**RESEARCH METHOD:**

The descriptive method was used to study mental health among college students.

**SAMPLE:**

A sample of 62 college students was selected by random sampling technique from government degree colleges of Patti and Tarn Taran affiliated to Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar only.

**RESEARCH TOOLS:**

1. Mental Health Inventory by Jagdish & Srivastav (1983)
2. Beck Depression Inventory by Beck & Steer (1996).

**STATISTICAL ANALYSES:**

- 2-way ANOVA was employed to study interaction effect of (1) gender & location; (2) Stream & social Category on mental health among college students.
- The Karl Pearson's correlation method was employed to study the relationship between mental health and depression across gender, location, stream and social category among college students.

**MENTAL HEALTH OF COLLEGE STUDENTS IN RELATION TO GENDER AND LOCATION:**

In order to study the interaction effect of i) Gender and ii) location on mental health among college students, statistical technique of two-way analysis of variance was applied.

**1. Mental health of college students in relation to gender and location:**

To find out the main effects of gender and location on mental health among college students along with their interaction effect, statistical technique of analysis of variance (2x2 factorial design involving two types of gender i.e. male and female and two types of location i.e. rural and urban) was applied on mental health. The mean and S.D.'s of mental health scores in relation to Gender x Location design is given in table 1.

**Table 1: Mean and S.D.'s of Mental health Scores Among College students in Gender x Location Design**

Gender		Location		Total
		Rural	Urban	
Male	N	4	6	10
	Mean	159.25	174.00	168.10
	S.D.	7.80	9.85	11.50
Female	N	32	20	52
	Mean	155.12	154.90	155.04
	S.D.	19.38	10.35	16.37
Total	N	36	26	62
	Mean	155.58	159.31	157.15
	S.D.	18.42	12.97	16.34

It is clear from table 1 that male college students had high mental health (168.10) than female college students (155.04). It is also further found that urban college students had high mental health i.e. 159.31 than rural college students i.e. 155.58. Further it is also reveals that the male college students with urban location had high mental health i.e. 174.00 as compare to male college students with rural location i.e. 159.25. On the other hand, high mental health was found in rural female i.e. 155.12 as compare to urban female college students i.e. 154.90.

In order to find out the interaction effect of gender and location on mental health, a two-way analysis of variance was carried out and the summary is given in table No 2.

**Table 2: Summary of Analysis of Variance (Gender x Location)**

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares (SS)	df	Mean Square	F-ratio
Gender (A)	1083.31	1	1083.31	4.37*
Location (B)	423.71	1	423.71	1.71
A x B	450.37	1	450.37	1.82
Error Within	14348.05	58	247.38	
Total	16301.69	61		

\* $p < .05$

**Main Effects:****Gender (A):**

The table 2 shows that F-value for main effect of Gender (A) came out to be 4.37, which is significant at 0.05 level. It is also inferred from the results that the male college students had high mental health (168.10) than female college students (155.04). This indicates that there is significant mean difference in mental health with respect to gender.

**Location (B):**

The table 2 reveals that F-value for main effect of Location (B) came out to be 1.71, which is not significant. This indicates that there is no significant difference in rural and urban college students. It is though inferred from results that urban college students had high mental health i.e. 159.31 than rural college students i.e. 155.58, but the difference is statistically not significant.

**Interaction Effect:****Gender (A) and Location (B):**

The table 2 highlights that F-value for the interaction effect of Gender and Location i.e. (AxB) came out to be 1.82, which is not significant. It clearly indicates that gender and location are independent to each other on mental health. Hence the hypothesis 1: "There is no significant interaction effect of (a) gender, (b) location on mental health among college students" was accepted.

**MENTAL HEALTH OF COLLEGE STUDENTS IN RELATION TO STREAM AND SOCIAL CATEGORY:**

In order to study the interaction effect of i) Stream and ii) Social category on mental health among college students, statistical technique of two-way analysis of variance was applied.

**1. Mental health of college students in relation to stream and social category:**

To find out the main effects of stream and social category on mental health among college students along with their interaction effect, statistical technique of analysis of variance (3x3 factorial design involving three types of stream i.e. Science, Humanities and commerce and three types of social category i.e. SC, BC and General) was applied on mental health. The mean and S.D.'s of mental health scores in relation to Stream x Social category design is given in table 3.

**Table 3: Mean and S.D.'s of Mental health Scores Among College students in Stream x Social category Design**

Stream		Social category			Total
		SC	BC	General	
Science	N	4	1	8	13
	Mean	157.75	163.00	155.88	157.00
	S.D.	14.43	-	19.37	16.58
Humanities	N	6	7	6	19
	Mean	156.67	145.29	156.17	152.32
	S.D.	12.07	21.89	28.84	21.48
Commerce	N	4	14	12	30
	Mean	155.00	163.36	158.42	160.27
	S.D.	16.59	12.43	8.68	11.67
Total	N	14	22	26	62
	Mean	156.50	157.59	157.12	157.15
	S.D.	12.99	17.51	17.49	16.34

It is clear from table 3 that college students of commerce stream had high mental health (160.27) than science (157.00) and humanities stream (152.32). It is also further found that college students belongs to BC stream had high mental health i.e. 163.36 than SC (155.00) and General category (157.12) college students. Further it is also reveals that in science stream, BC college students had high mental health i.e. 163.00 as compare to SC (157.75) and general (155.88) college students. On the other hand, in humanities stream, SC college students high mental health i.e. 156.67 as compare to BC (145.29) and general category college students (156.17). The table 3 further reveals that in case of commerce stream, BC college students had high mental health i.e. 163.36 as compare to SC (155.00) and general (158.42) college students.

In order to find out the interaction effect of stream and social category on mental health, a two-way analysis of variance was carried out and the summary is given in table 4.

**Table 4: Summary of Analysis of Variance (Stream x Social category)**

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares (SS)	df	Mean Square	F-ratio
Stream (A)	439.53	2	219.76	.79
Social category (B)	2.71	2	1.35	.005
A x B	875.27	4	218.81	.79
Error Within	14683.35	53	277.04	
Total	16301.69	61		

#### Main Effects:

##### Stream (A):

The table 4 shows that F-value for main effect of Stream (A) came out to be .79, which is not significant. It is though inferred from the results that the college students of commerce stream had high mental health (160.27) than science (157.00) and humanities stream (152.32), but the difference is statistically not significant.

##### Social category (B):

The table 4 reveals that F-value for main effect of Social category (B) came out to be .005, which is not significant. This indicates that there is no significant difference in social category of college students. It is though inferred from results that college students belongs to BC stream had high mental health i.e. 163.36 than SC (155.00) and General category (157.12) college students, but the difference is statistically not significant.

#### Interaction Effect:

##### Stream (A) and Social category (B):

The table 4 highlights that F-value for the interaction effect of Stream and Social category i.e. (AxB) came out to be .79, which is not significant. It clearly indicates that stream and social category are independent to each other on mental health. Hence the hypothesis 2: "There is no significant interaction effect of (a) stream, (b) social category on mental health among college students" was accepted.

#### COEFFICIENT OF CORRELATION OF MENTAL HEALTH WITH DEPRESSION AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS:

The coefficient of correlation of mental health with depression among college students is shown in table 5

**Table 5: Coefficient of Correlation of Mental health with Depression among college students (N=62)**

Group	N	r
Total	62	-0.45**
Male	10	-0.56
Female	52	-0.39*
Rural	36	-0.48**
Urban	26	-0.40*
Science	13	-0.41
Humanities	19	-0.62**
Commerce	30	-0.30
SC	14	-0.29
BC	22	-0.52*
General	26	-0.60**

\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$

The table 5 indicates that the coefficient of correlation between mental health and depression was negative and significant  $r = -0.45$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ ). The table 5 further shows depression was negatively correlated with mental health in male group ( $r = -0.56$ ) and in female group ( $r = -0.39$ \*,  $p < 0.05$ ). There was negative and significant correlation in case of rural college students ( $r = -0.48$ \*\*,  $p < 0.01$ ) and also in case of urban college students  $r = -0.40$ \*,  $p < 0.05$ ). The table 5 further indicates that coefficient of correlation between mental health and depression in science stream was negative ( $r = -0.41$ ). The coefficient of correlation between mental health and depression in humanities stream was negative and significant ( $r = -0.62$ \*\*,  $p < 0.01$ ) and the coefficient of correlation between mental health and depression in commerce stream was negative ( $r = -0.30$ ).

The coefficient of correlation between mental health and depression in SC category college students was negative ( $r = -0.29$ ). The coefficient of correlation between mental health and depression in BC category college students was negative and significant ( $r = -0.52$ \*,  $p < 0.05$ ) and the coefficient of correlation between mental health and depression in general category college students was negative and significant ( $r = -0.60$ \*\*,  $p < 0.01$ ).

It was found that mental health was negatively but not significantly correlated in male group, science & commerce stream college students and also in SC category college students with depression, but this relationship was negatively and significantly correlated among different groups i.e. in total, female, rural, urban and humanities and BC and general group with depression among college students. Hence the hypothesis 3: "There is significant relationship between mental health and depression across gender, location, stream and social category among college students" was accepted in total group but partially accepted in sub-groups.

#### EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS:

1. The colleges should have counsellors and guidance workers in order to help in solving personal and educational problems of college students.
2. The colleges should organize competitions, functions, workshops and celebrations of days for channelizing the energies of students.
3. The college administrators should provide proper facilities and congenial environment to lessen the depression among students.

#### REFERENCES:

1. American Psychiatric Association (1994). Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (4/e.). Washington: Dc. Author.
2. Beck, A.T. (1974). The development of depression: a cognitive model. In R.J. Friedman and M.M. Katz (Eds), The psychology of depression: Contemporary theory and research. New York: Wiley.
3. Beck, A.T. (1996). Manual for the Beck Depression Inventory-11. San Antonio: The psychological corporation.
4. Berk, L.E. (2005). Infants and children: Parental through middle childhood (5/e). New York: Pearson.
5. Gathercole, S.E. (2004). Working memory and learning during the school years. Proc. British Academy, 125(2004), 365-380.
6. Jagdish & Srivastav, A.K. (1983). Manual for Mental Health Inventory. Agra: National Psychological Cooperation.
7. Jha, A.P. (2005). A study of mental health of secondary school children. Indian Psychology Review, 64(3), 119-122.
8. Kaur, P. (2011). Achievement Motivation of school students in relation to their mental health. (Unpublished M.Ed. Dissertation). Punjabi University, Patiala.
9. Kumar, P. (1991). Manual of mental health check-list (MHC). Department of Psychology. Sardar Patel University.
10. Miller, W.R., & Sligman, M.E.P. (1973). Depression and the perception of reinforcement. Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 82, 62-73.
11. Nanda, A.K. (2001). Mental health of high school students: A comparative study. Indian Psychology Review, 56(1), 2-7.